

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 30, 2004 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. In view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-18 as originally filed stand rejected. The Office Action rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite. The Office Action stated that the phrase “a client in addition to the participants” had insufficient antecedent basis. In response, applicants have amended claim 1 to remove the words “in addition to” and to recite that the client is in conference with the participants.

The Office Action also rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer et al. U.S. Patent 6,775,247 (hereinafter “Shaffer”) in view of Sandvoss et al. U.S. Patent 5,745,380 (hereinafter “Sandvoss”).

To more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 10 to include the limitations that the bridge server simultaneously receives multimedia conferencing data from the plurality of conference participants, and the multimedia conferencing data include a video stream from each of the participants. Thus, the amended claims require that the bridge server receive simultaneously the video streams from all of the plurality of participants. As described in the specification of the application, the invention provides an intelligent way to select one of the multiple video streams simultaneously received from the participants for viewing by a client whose network link can only carry the video stream of one participant at a time. *See*, Specification p. 9, line 23- p. 10,

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line 8. To that end, the client is connected to the multimedia conference via a bridge server. The bridge server receives the multimedia conferencing data including video streams from the participants, and selects the video stream of one participant for sending to the client.

Specification p. 11. In accordance with the invention, the bridge server periodically calculates weights for the participants based on the participants' conferencing activity state data, and transmits to the client the video stream of the participant that is given the highest weight.

Specification p. 13.

Applicants submit that the claims as clarified by the amendments are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited references. Specifically, contrary to the assertion of the Office Action, Shaffer does not teach the selection of a video stream from received multimedia conferencing data. In fact, Shaffer teaches away from such operation. The central goal of Shaffer is to reduce the amount of conferencing data to be processed by a multimedia conference unit ("MCU") and to reduce the network bandwidth required to conduct a video conference. Shaffer col. 2, lines 23-36. The solution provided by Shaffer is to allow only a dominant caller to transmit video data to the MCU, and the other callers that are deemed as subordinate callers are told to stop transmitting video packets to the MCU. *See*, Shaffer col. 7, 34-39. As stated by Shaffer: "By having the dominant video signal and none of the subordinate video signals sent to the MCU, the resultant savings in bandwidth on the network, e.g., a LAN, is substantial." Shaffer col. 3, lines 55-58. Thus, instead of receiving multiple video streams from all of the plurality of participants as called for in the claims, the MCU according to Shaffer chooses not to receive video streams from the subordinate users. As a result, the MCU does not select one video stream from multiple video streams received from the conference participants, as required by the claims.

Since Shaffer lacks those limitations, the combination of Shaffer and Sandvoss would be insufficient for establishing a case of obviousness under Section 103.

Moreover, Shaffer teaches away from the claimed invention, because it removes the condition for the claimed invention to operate. As required by the claims, the bridge server receives simultaneously the multimedia conference data from the participants, including one video stream from each of the participants. There is a need to select one video stream from the received multimedia conferencing data only because there are multiple video streams simultaneously received from the participants. In sharp contrast, the MCU of Shaffer does not even have to select from multiple received video streams, because only the dominant video signal may be sent to the MCU. Since Shaffer actually takes away the condition for the claimed invention to operate, it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to reach the claimed invention using Shaffer as a starting point.

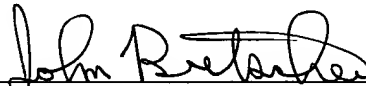
In this regard, it should be noted that it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to even try to combine Shaffer and Sandvoss. As noted above, Shaffer teaches that only the video stream of the dominant user is sent to the MCU. The device of Sandvoss, on the other hand, receives multiple streams 4a-c and executes a weighting function to determine which stream is to be actively transmitted. *See*, Sandvoss col. 3, lines 53-65. Since the MCU of Shaffer only has one video stream from the dominant user, following the teaching of Shaffer would obviate the need for the system taught by Sandvoss. Thus, one would not have been motivated to try to combine Shaffer and Sandvoss. Ultimately, as discussed earlier, even if Shaffer and Sandvoss could somehow be combined, the combination would still not reach the claimed invention.

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Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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